

VZCZCXYZ0021
PP RUEHWEB

DE RUEHLJ #0285/01 1241403
ZNY CCCCC ZZH
P 041403Z MAY 07
FM AMEMBASSY LJUBLJANA
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 5786
RUEHNO/USMISSION USNATO PRIORITY 1133
INFO RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC PRIORITY
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC PRIORITY
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHDC PRIORITY
RUEKJCS/JOINT STAFF WASHDC PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L LJUBLJANA 000285

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PM/RSAT (KDOWLEY, DGLANCY, AND CDANIELEWSKI), EUR/NCE
(SSADLE), NEA/I (TGRAMAGLIA), DRL/P, DRL/NESCA

E.O. 12958: DECL: 04/26/2017
TAGS: [MARR](#) [MASS](#) [MOPS](#) [PREL](#) [PTER](#) [SI](#)
SUBJECT: SLOVENIA'S WAY FORWARD ON IRAQ

REF: A. SECSTATE 54925

[1](#)B. LJUBLJANA 95

Classified By: COM for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

[1](#)1. (U) This is an action cable, please see paragraph 6.

[1](#)2. (C) SUMMARY. Slovenia is a standout ally in NATO - currently 11% of its active duty forces are deployed in support of NATO, EU, and UN operations abroad - and is making small, but concrete contributions to coalition efforts in Iraq. Its most prominent and most politically difficult contribution - four military trainers at NTM-I - was unceremoniously halved by personnel reductions made by NATO Command in February. Given strident public opposition, political pressures, troop deployments elsewhere, and an overwhelming policy focus on the country's upcoming EU Presidency, Slovenia will be hard pressed to do more than continue current contributions to the coalition effort in Iraq. That said, post will encourage Slovenia to maintain its two trainers at NTM-I and believes a well-tailored, specific request for additional troop and financial support to potential NTM-I projects could yield results. These contributions, in tandem with support of Slovenia's NGO program for child victims of war, which is losing its current funding source for work with Iraqi mental health experts, would anchor Slovenia firmly to the "Way Forward" for the long haul. We request more detailed information, as outlined in paragraph 6, about needs and potential areas for Slovenia to contribute. END SUMMARY.

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A Standout NATO Ally Doing What It Can In Iraq
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[1](#)3. (U) As of April 2007, Slovenia has 11% of its troops deployed internationally in support of NATO, EU, or UN operations in Afghanistan, Bosnia, Iraq, Kosovo, Lebanon, and elsewhere. In February 2007, Slovenia deployed over 600 troops from its 10th Battalion to NATO's KFOR, its largest international deployment since independence in 1991. Slovenian troops have been in Kosovo since January 2000 and in Bosnia since October 1997 (originally with SFOR and today under the command of EUFOR). Slovenian troops have been in Afghanistan since March 2003, currently stand at 54 (52 with the Italian-led PRT in Herat and two in Kabul), and will be increased to 66 in August 2007. Slovenia has donated 10,000 decommissioned automatic rifles and two million pieces of ammunition to the Afghanistan National Army, a total value of USD \$660,000. Twelve Slovenian troops have been supporting

UNIFIL in Lebanon since December 2006. See reftel b for in-depth coverage of Slovenia's current international contributions.

14. (SBU) Slovenian police trainers have been at NTM-I in Iraq since February 2006. The decision to put Slovenian boots on the ground in Iraq was highly unpopular with the Slovenian general public and political opposition then and continues to be unpopular today. Frustratingly for us, their contingent of four trainers was unexpectedly reduced to two in February 2007 without notice to us after a NATO decision to reduce forces at NTM-I. Two trainers were able to rotate into NTM-I in February 2007, and Slovenia continues its commitment to staff those posts at NTM-I for the near future. Slovenia has donated USD 5 million in light weapons and ammunition to the Iraq Security Forces, donated approximately EUR 200,000 to the NTM-I Trust Fund, and paid for EUR 172,000 worth of transportation costs for a Hungarian tank donation to Iraq that traveled through Slovenia. Slovenian police trainers served at JIPTC from February 2004 to April 2007, twice extending their mandate before JIPTC's initial training mission was concluded. Requests to extend their trainers a third time, to August 2007, were denied because the move would require Parliamentary re-authorization that could not have occurred within a reasonable time frame for the mission. Through its government-sponsored NGO "Together," the Slovenian government also supports training for mental health experts in Iraq focused on psycho-social support for children affected by war. NOTE: Together's Director told EmbOff April 25 that the Austrian Government will be discontinuing support for the program and that the organization is looking for funding to continue its work with Iraqi mental health professionals. END NOTE.

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Comment: Slovenia's "Way Forward" In Iraq
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15. (C) The GoS has repeatedly heard and responded to USG calls for more international contributions often producing in numbers that, given Slovenia's small size, far outpace other coalition members. In both Iraq and Afghanistan, the GoS has looked for creative ways to contribute substantially, and continues to do so. Given public opposition to the war in Iraq, Slovenia's significant troop deployments in support of NATO operations elsewhere, an overwhelming policy focus on the country's upcoming EU Presidency (from January to June 2008), the nearing of the next parliamentary elections (fall 2008), and perhaps most importantly, the sudden reduction of Slovenia's strenuously negotiated contingent to NTM-I this spring, it is unlikely that Slovenia will be able to do more than continue its current contributions to the coalition effort in Iraq.

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Action Request
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16. (C) With these conditions in mind, we believe that any approach to Slovenia should build upon its current contributions and be well-tailored to its niche capabilities.

We believe that keeping Slovenia in Iraq, given its political significance here, is a high priority. Any discussion of future drawdowns at NTM-I, therefore, should include this post. Second, we welcome more detailed information from USNATO or elsewhere about needs and potential areas for Slovenia to contribute. We believe Slovenia would seriously consider specific requests for additional modest troop and financial support to potential NTM-I training programs for gendarme police training and security sector reform and to the NTM-I Trust Fund. Third, we are interested in whether State has interest in collaboration with Slovenia's NGO Together for further work in Iraq. This marquee Slovenian aid program to Iraq will likely cease operation without intervention.

17. (C) COM will continue to press Slovenia to maintain present contributions to coalition efforts in Iraq and NATO

operations elsewhere in conversations with the Prime Minister, Minister of Foreign Affairs and Minister of Defense. We would welcome any specific contributions that the Slovenes could make in Iraq to allow for a tailored approach to the GoS and recommend this be a potential topic at the planned Slovenian-American Pol-Mil Talks planned for May 22 in Washington.

ROBERTSON